

Kosmas Applauds House Passage of Senate NASA Authorization Bill

Legislation Includes Kosmas Backed Measures to Add Shuttle Mission, Diversify the Local Economy

September 29, 2010

(Washington, DC) — Today, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24) voted in support of the NASA Authorization Act of 2010 (S. 3729), legislation that will minimize the spaceflight gap, protect jobs, and provide much-needed direction for NASA and the workers along Florida's Space Coast. The legislation, which unanimously passed the Senate in August, provides for an additional Shuttle mission, encourages the growth of the commercial spaceflight industry, and funds the development of a NASA-led vehicle.

Kosmas has been active in urging her House colleagues to take an up or down vote on the Senate version of the NASA Authorization bill, which strikes a better balance in terms of continuing the development of a NASA-led vehicle while supporting the growth of the commercial spaceflight industry.

"This legislation is critical to our efforts to help protect Space Coast jobs and minimize the human spaceflight gap," said Suzanne Kosmas. "Adding another Shuttle flight is a major success in our fight to preserve our highly skilled workforce and ease the transition for the Space Coast. In addition, this bill accelerates the development of a NASA-led vehicle to keep NASA strong, while at the same time supporting the growth of the commercial spaceflight industry, which will help diversify the local economy and provide new opportunities for Space Coast workers."

"Quickly signing this legislation into law will provide much-needed direction and stability for NASA and the Space Coast while maintaining America's global leadership in space exploration," added Kosmas.

The bill authorizes an additional Shuttle flight to provide necessary support for the extension of the International Space Station (ISS). The bill boosts funding for the development of commercial cargo and crew technology to provide continued access to the Space Station and relieve the U.S. reliance on Russian partners. The legislation also extends ISS operations and full utilization through at least 2020 to maximize investments in the Station and support international scientific collaboration.

Additionally, the legislation authorizes the immediate development of a NASA-led heavy lift launch vehicle capable of supporting missions beyond low-Earth orbit starting in 2016. The vehicle will be available to provide backup service to the ISS if necessary and will make comprehensive use of our investments in the Shuttle and Constellation programs.

With passage in the House, the bill now heads to the President for his signature.

Congresswoman Kosmas's floor speech in support of the legislation can be found below:

Watch here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZX9sfxDcug>

Thank you Mister Speaker. I would also like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for their leadership on this issue.

Mister Speaker, tonight we consider legislation of great importance to Florida's Space Coast and our Nation — the NASA Authorization Act. I want to echo the sentiments of colleagues who have suggested that the uncertainty surrounding NASA and our manned space exploration has caused a great amount of anguish and difficult times for my constituents, literally thousands of individuals, families and businesses

This bill will define NASA's future by building on its past.

The legislation mandates one additional shuttle flight next year which will provide additional job stability for thousands of workers and ensure the long term viability of the International Space Station — a national laboratory 200 miles above our heads only now complete after 10 years of construction which has endless research and education possibilities.

This bill also directs the development of a new NASA-led heavy lift vehicle, utilizing Shuttle and Constellation work, which will provide our astronauts the opportunity for even greater exploration to asteroids and eventually Mars sooner than the current program. This exploration mission will drive technological innovation as we strive to address its challenges as well as to inspire our students to become engineers and astronauts. And this bill provides the funding to update the infrastructure at Kennedy Space Center so it will truly be America's 21st Century gateway to space.

Finally, the Authorization seeds the commercial spaceflight industry — which includes new entrepreneurial small businesses along with the giants of aerospace with decades of experience sending our astronauts and cargo to space. This will provide new job opportunities for our skilled workforce and options for researchers and tourists to experience spaceflight.

On Friday, in my district, about 900 workers will lose their jobs as the Shuttle program begins to wind down. We must do everything that we can possibly do to preserve this unique workforce, referred to by my colleague earlier. We cannot afford to lose our technological supremacy because we failed to act. Failure is not an option. Please vote yes on this bill.

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